

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 8, 1988

Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman, Subcommittee on Foreign
Operations
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We are writing you regarding humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people.

The people of Afghanistan continue to face an overwhelming humanitarian crisis. Soviet offensives against the Afghan civilian population have created the world's largest refugee population. Approximately 1.24 million people have been killed. Irrigation facilities, crops, medical installations, schools, and transportation networks have been deliberately destroyed by Soviet troops in Afghanistan.

As Soviet troops begin to pull out of Afghanistan, thousands of refugees will begin returning to their devastated homeland. Humanitarian needs will be greater than ever before. The humanitarian assistance program, created by Congress without opposition in 1985, has proven instrumental in providing those remaining inside Afghanistan with desperately needed medical facilities, food, commodity support, agricultural infrastructure, literacy training, and educational materials.

In FY '88, the Congress increased funding for the Afghanistan humanitarian assistance program from \$30 to \$45 million. However, despite the increased humanitarian needs, and the prospect of thousands of Afghans returning to a ravaged homeland, the Administration has only requested for next year funding levels equivalent to those adopted for FY '88. Earlier this year, the Senate unanimously called for "increased United States humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people both during and following a withdrawal of Soviet and Soviet bloc forces from Afghanistan."

Should the U.S. wait until FY '90 to provide sufficient levels of humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan, the

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conditions inside Afghanistan may reach tragic proportions. There is barely sufficient agricultural capacity for those now inside the country. With 5 million returning refugees, Afghanistan could experience severe famine.

A recent staff report of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee recommends doubling the U.S. cross border humanitarian assistance program. We endorse that recommendation and urge the Subcommittee to increase the current cross-border program from \$45 to \$90 million for FY '89. This is an extremely modest request in view of the fact the entire nation of Afghanistan has been devastated by nine years of brutal warfare.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dan Rostenkowski", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.